PIKES PEAK HUMAN RELATIONS COALITION

125 N. Parkside ● P.O. BOX 554 ● Colorado Springs, Colorado 80901-0554

23 November 1996

Dear Endorsers and friends,

On Oct. 24 the Palmer High School newspaper printed an article entitled "Finding True Love: Gay Teens Search for a Place," about the difficulties gay students experience in high school. This article is widely considered well-written, thoughtful and informative, but touched off a debate in the community about the appropriateness of the subject for school newspapers. As a result, School District 11 is currently reviewing its policy on student publications.

The Human Relations Coalition Board is concerned about the District's review as there are some indications that a revised policy would severely restrict the right of free speech. For example, an early draft of the revision included language that would allow school officials to eliminate articles expressing views "inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized social order." At a minimum, such a revision would make it easier to suppress information about different groups of people and make the school a place were students are taught to disparage any idea that takes them out of their comfort zone or taught that it is O.K. to disregard the rights of certain minorities.

The HRC Board urges you to write to members of the District 11 School Board asking them to keep the current policy on school publications intact and to come out with an unequivocal statement supporting the rights of all persons and groups to express their views consistent with Colorado state law. Please write to Bruce Doyle or Lyman Kaiser (the two members of the School Board charged with reviewing the policy) at District 11 School Board, 1115 N. El Paso, Colorado Springs, 80903.

Sincerely,

F. Mike Miles
Vice-Chair
Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition